

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting October 28, 2013

7:00 p.m.
Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Atwater, Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Luxenberg,
Pattacini, Scappaticci, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel,
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
Matfess

ABSENT: Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management
Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

A. OPENING

A.1&2. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of
Education of October 16, 2013.**

**Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the
motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor. (Ms. Hagenow was not yet in
attendance)**

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Student Representative Report

Dr. Kisiel introduced Chris Till and Rich Zeigler to give an update on the projects that were approved in the November 2012 bond referendum. Mr. Till is the Town Facilities Director and Mr. Zeigler is the Director of School Facilities.

Mr. Till reviewed the roofing project at Bowers was completed over the summer. The project is eligible for a 65% reimbursement grant and has a value of \$750,000. The roof has a 30 year warrantee.

The Waddell project, which cost \$600,000, had part flat roof and part shingle roof over the gym, was also completed over the summer. There was also some chimney masonry and repointing done. This project is also eligible for a grant reimbursement from the state of 65%. There is a 30 year warrantee on the flat roof and a 20 year warrantee on the shingle roof. Gutters were also installed. The masonry staining was cleaned and the gutters should help prevent more staining.

Mr. Till reviewed that the Verplanck roof was not done due to funding issues and he hopes that may be done next summer.

At MHS, repiping of the gas lines in the Science wing was completed over the summer. The cost was \$100,000. The project was accomplished with innovative design work around existing conditions, which meant no asbestos remediation was required.

The elevator work that was anticipated to be done was not necessary. It was found that the work had been done in the early 80's.

At Illing Mr. Till reviewed that the portables were removed. Prior to removal, anything reusable was removed. The cost of demolition was \$10,000.

Also at Illing, Phase I of the renovation was completed. The cost of this project was \$90,000. Phase II in this design phase will be completed in the summer of 2014.

The bond included funds to update the electric at Buckley, Keeney, Robertson, and Washington. The work at Buckley and Keeney is in progress. Unfortunately, based on the time frames with the power company the work could not be done over the summer. The work will be ready to go during the Summer of 2014. The work at Washington and Robertson has been put on hold for now pending possible renovations at those schools.

Mr. Till noted that due to the tripping hazard, five classrooms at Washington did have the carpel removal and asbestos abatement done with new tile flooring being installed this past summer. Only priority hazard areas were dealt with at a cost of \$40,000 of the anticipated \$120,000 for this project.

The bond provided funding for three buildings to have brick masonry work completed, including Central Office, Waddell, and Washington. The work at Washington is on hold. At Waddell the work was done in conjunction with

the roofing project. However, there is still significant damage on the south face of the school that the architect estimates will cost \$300,000 to replace sections of the building with select repointing. The cost for the work needed at Central Office is \$80,000-\$100,000.

Mr. Zeigler reviewed that in the last year or so damage to the brick in the top third layer on the South side of Waddell has been discovered. The damage is caused by water coming through the face of the brick. The estimated cost to remove this layer, which is thought to be interior brick instead of the necessary exterior brick, is \$300,000. They have discovered the same issue on the south side of Verplanck as well. This damage has only surfaced in the last year or so.

Mr. Zeigler explained that when numbers for repairs are given, they are based on the conditions at that time. The longer it takes to complete the project, the more deterioration occurs.

Ms. Cruz wondered, with the top 1/3 of the brick disintegrating at Waddell, what impact does that have on the kids. Mr. Zeigler stated the interior of the building is dry and sound. There has been no infiltration into the building. There was water that came in through the roof, but that has been fixed with the new roof.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered what year Waddell was built. Mr. Zeigler thought it was about 1958. Mr. Scappaticci wondered who the contract was that used interior brick on the exterior, and hoped we could find out! Mr. Scappaticci was glad to hear that there is a good working relationship between Mr. Till and Mr. Zeigler and their departments.

Mr. Pattacini commended the town and Board of Ed for working together on these projects.

Mr. Till reviewed that estimates are done for bond prior to any of these projects. Sometimes you wind up spending less, sometimes more. For the MHS gas project only \$100,000 was spent when \$300,000 was requested.

Mr. Pattacini thought it would be helpful to the Board if the items on the bond could be charted with the actual cost so the money could be tracked. Mr. Till noted they are in the process of closing out the summer projects and he will be able to provide an updated spreadsheet in the next few weeks.

Mr. Pattacini felt it made sense to prioritize future projects based on current information, for example the \$300,000 necessary to fix the building at Waddell that didn't exist two years ago.

Mr. Pattacini noted the Board of Directors had authorized a feasibility study for an athletic facility at MHS, and he wondered what the status of that was. Mr. Till stated the Request for Proposal has been advertized and the walk-through was last week. The RFP spells out the responsibilities of the firm to work with the Athletic Department and the Board of Education representatives to be sure all needs are considered. Mr. Pattacini was concerned that if the project is considered, that we don't lose any program space in the process.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Secretary Leon moved to add item 5 (IDEA 611 grant) and 6 (IDEA 619 grant) to the Consent Calendar. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Kisiel noted these two items were inadvertently left off the agenda. We need to get the town to approve these appropriations for special education funding.

Mr. Thames noted the grant is a revision. Ms. Matfess reviewed that the original awards were preliminary and the actual awards represent a decrease on both grants.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

Dr. Kisiel presented six items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Highland Park Elementary School General Supplies and Materials to Highland Park Elementary School Contracted Services account in the amount of \$420
- Transfer from Martin Elementary School Admin General Supply to Martin Elementary School Admin Dues & Fees account in the amount of \$600
- Transfer from Central Office/Special Education Consultant to Central Office/Special Education Other Purchased Services account in the amount of \$35,000
- Transfer from Bennet Academy General Supplies and Materials to Bennet Academy Contracted Services account in the amount of \$1,200

C.3. Establish an appropriation for the FY13-14 for \$8,101 under the Bilingual Education grant to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education

C.4. Establish an appropriation for the FY13-14 for \$2,592,535 under the Alliance District Grant to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education

C.5. Establish an appropriation for the preliminary grant award amount of \$1,578,625 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611, to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

C.6. Establish an appropriation for the preliminary grant aware amount of \$64,241 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement (IDEA) 619, to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, Item C in the agenda, Items 1-6.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, wished Ms. Luxenberg the best of luck as this is the last meeting before the election and she is not running this year. He notes that parenthood is profound and he hopes to see her back on the Board in the future.

Mr. Aiken noted trust is the foundation of everything in life. This starts with the parent/child relationship and also the teachers/family/school relationship. This takes time to build and he is curious how a "superschool" will be able to build that trust, especially at a school like Washington. He notes not all problems can be fixed in cookie-cutter fashion.

Mr. Aiken notes he cannot treat his two children the same, as everyone is an individual, and that problems like the achievement gap and race relations will not go away just by trying something new. He feels the underlying problem needs to be solved. Mr. Aiken does not trust the SMARTR Committee yet. Instead of solving the problem, the Board of Education and Board of Directors created this committee and in the meantime the problems are getting worse with time. If Mr. Aiken is to develop trust, he needs to know the plan.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, recommended a six part documentary on CPT called *African Americans, Many Rivers to Cross*. Mr. Stringfellow noted Columbus Day had recently passed, and we should recognize the Portuguese and noted that Columbus did discover part of the new world.

Mr. Stringfellow noted there are STEM courses at the high school level. He noted some TV commercials regarding the subject by Chevron and Exxon Mobile.

Mr. Stringfellow had several articles to pass along to Mr. Geary. He noted there was a social media forum this past Saturday that he had attended.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

None.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Plan – Policy #4114.1

Dr. Kisiel reviewed this policy update was based on OSHA and state regulations.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Plan, Policy #4114.1. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

F.2. Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (students) – Policy #4013

Dr. Kisiel noted there was some confusion between the student policy and the personnel policy and he would like this tabled for now.

F.3. Prohibition of Sex Discrimination – Policy #4011

Dr. Kisiel asked for this item to be postponed due to some confusion.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1. Reports of Suspected Abuse and/or Neglect of Children – Policy #5141.2

Dr. Kisiel presented this revised policy, which is consistent with PA 1353, including specific language. This policy requires all employees to report suspected abuse and/or neglect.

Ms. Cruz noted that at a recent DCF meeting changes in reporting rules was discussed. She found no reference in this policy to the consequence of a

mandated reporter not complying with the law, which is arrest. She wonders if we should add that. Dr. Kisiel felt adding something along the lines of, "failure to comply could result in possible criminal action", and he will consider it before the next meeting.

G.2. Non-Discrimination (Personnel) – New Policy

Dr. Kisiel presented this new policy that addresses both gender identity and genetic information. This is related to PA 55.

G.3. Non-Discrimination (Students) – New Policy

Dr. Kisiel presented this new policy regarding non-discrimination regarding students. It is similar to the above policy regarding personnel.

G.4. Transfer and Non-Resident Students – Policy #5119

Dr. Kisiel noted the last time this policy was updated was in 1997. Since then No Child Left Behind has ended and clarity was needed regarding student transfers and non-resident students. Dr. Kisiel stated that this policy is very clear that students go to school at the school they are assigned.

Dr. Kisiel further reviewed that this policy change will allow seniors who move out of town during their senior year to complete the school year without tuition charge, provided a good scholastic and behavioral record are maintained. This policy also allows other high school students, who are in good standing both behaviorally and academically, to complete their current year if they move during the fourth marking period. Another part of this policy states that if a family moves to a different district in town after October 1st they can request their child remain in the same school for the remainder of the year, providing their own transportation. There is no guarantee that this request can be accommodated.

Mr. Crockett wondered who determines if a student is in good standing behaviorally and academically. Dr. Kisiel stated that each student would be evaluated individually by a committee made of the Assistant Superintendent Radikas and two principals involved.

Mr. Pattacini wondered how this revision to the policy changes the current practice. Dr. Kisiel stated that it clarifies that transfers are not automatic and he has denied most requests over the last year and a half. The previous form used to request "non-neighborhood" attendance no longer exists.

Mr. Pattacini recalled that years ago there was a choice program in town and once you were in the program you had the right to stay at that school until the completion of the last grade. Dr. Kisiel agreed that was a previous policy that no longer exists but there are some students that are in schools chosen during NCLB, especially in the case of younger siblings still being there.

Those families will have the opportunity to stay, although as of next year no transportation will be provided for them. As of next year no more transfers will occur.

Mr. Pattacini was a bit confused between choice and AYP transfers. Dr. Kisiel offered to add language regarding AYP transfers if the Board desired.

Ms. Cruz cautioned against adding language regarding AYP transfers, as over the next years the small group of students impacted, the policy will need to be revised again in the near future.

G.5. Visitors – Policy #1300

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that the first paragraph is supposed to be redacted, not underlined. This policy is a revision of a policy written in 1993 and last revised in 2003. This policy now reflects current practice.

Mr. Thames wondered if visitors are escorted through the building once signed in. Dr. Kisiel stated that visitors are buzzed in and sign in with the office. In most cases they have a previously scheduled appointment. People seem respectful of the process.

Ms. Cruz wondered if “elected officials” should be added to the list of visitors. It was determined that is not necessary as they fall into other categories.

Mr. Pattacini asked for clarity regarding trespassers, in one spot it says school administration and in another just administration. He wasn’t sure if that meant Central Office administration. Dr. Kisiel noted that school administration can call the police immediately, without permission from Central Office. He will clarify the language.

G.6. Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic Coaches – Policy #4150

Dr. Kisiel notes this revision now specifies “athletic” coaches instead of simply coaches. Also, there are now appeals under legislation.

G.7. School Wellness – Policy #5141.4

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that there has been an ongoing disagreement between the principals over how to celebrate birthdays in elementary schools. Some buildings allow cupcakes and pizza, while some do not. The revision to this policy outlines that class birthday celebrations will no longer include food of any kind. Food can, however, be a part of a cultural celebration in a curriculum-related project as those experiences are good for kids. The standards required by the Health Department are necessary to comply with.

Mr. Thames stated that while he understands some of the reasoning behind a no food birthday celebration, he thinks it goes too far and takes the joy and magical memories away from the children. He feels the children will miss out on social, cultural, and emotion experiences and opportunities to connect with their classmates. Mr. Thames further stated he feels this policy goes too far, and is almost punitive.

Dr. Kisiel felt that teachers prefer not to have to worry about food and celebrations without food are welcome. Mr. Thames respects Dr. Kisiel's opinion, however he disagrees.

Mr. Atwater wondered which schools already forbid food for celebrations. Dr. Kisiel noted that both Keeney and Buckley do not allow birthday snacks. Dr. Kisiel further noted that the principals created the language in regards to this policy.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if other districts have made this policy. Dr. Kisiel stated that it is not uncommon.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Scappaticci stated that Mr. Zeigler had messaged him and stated that Waddell was actually built in 1951.

Mr. Pattacini reminded everyone that the election is next week, Tuesday November 5th. He reviewed that tomorrow evening at Lincoln Center the PTA is sponsoring a Board of Education forum and the public is invited.

Mr. Pattacini congratulated the Manchester High School Marching Band. They recently competed in the Regional New England State Championship and placed first in their division.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Policy Committee

Ms. Hagenow noted that the policies presented tonight were discussed. She noted they had heard from a teacher at Keeney that the kids don't seem to miss the no-snack birthdays over the last four years of the policy there.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, agrees with Mr. Thames regarding snacks at birthday celebrations. His daughter attends Washington, which has a healthy snack policy so for his daughter's birthday his partner brought in a fruit platter. As a parent he struggles with what is in the best interests of the child. He feels that when a parent brings in a snack for a birthday the child feels like a rock star and that it is a special treat for the parent to come in and share a snack with the

class. He feels there is more serious business to discuss. Mr. Aiken noted there were more questions over this snack policy than there were for Mr. Till and Mr. Zeigler regarding buildings that are falling apart. Mr. Aiken is not saying he doesn't trust this board, but he feels they don't understand what is in the best interest of these kids, teachers, and neighborhoods. While he understands Sheff v O'Neil, racial balance, budgets, test scores, and a lot of details, Mr. Aiken would like focus on the most important thing, making a holistic decision. Mr. Aiken ended by saying that a camel is a horse, designed by a committee.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports items 3 and 4 on the Consent Calendar. He notes special education is important and costly. Regarding the school facilities project update, Mr. Stringfellow felt it was a good update, with thorough reports and honest assessments. Mr. Stringfellow noted a recent article in the newspaper about neglect, and another on school-based healthcare in East Hartford. He recommended an article in *National Geographic* on mixed race children in the October edition. In *Sports Illustrated* there was an article on the "let's move" program for kids with Michelle Obama. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended an article on bullying in the October 23rd edition of *USA Today*.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Cruz would like an update on school safety.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary